

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

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EXDIS

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TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, UK, GT, BH

SLBJECT: UK-US TALKS ON LATIN AMERICA: BELIZE

1. UK-US CONSULTATIONS ON LATIN AMERICA WERE HELD AT DEPARTMENT ON APRIL 28. MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, TED ROWLANDS, LED BRITISH DELEGATION. US SIDE WAS HEADED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND INCLUDED DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARIES RYAN AND LUERS AND OTHER BUREAU OFFICERS. FIRST SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION WAS BELIZE.

2. ROWLANDS OPENED WITH REPORT OF UK-GUATEMALA TALKS OVER BELIZE HELD IN NEW ORLEANS, APRIL 26-27. ROWLANDS SAID THAT FORMAL MEETINGS DURING THE SESSION WERE UNPRODUCTIVE BECAUSE OF INHIBITING PRESENCE OF SOME 20 PEOPLE AT THE TABLE, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM GUATEMALAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND LEADER OF BELIZEAN OPPOSITION. CONSEQUENTLY,

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THE REAL BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED IN PRIVATE, VERY CONFIDEN-

TIAL MEETINGS BETWEEN ROWLANDS AND GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER, ADOLFO MOLINA ARANTES.

3. ROWLANDS SAID THAT, AS SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD SUGGESTED TO FOREIGN MINISTER CALLAGHAN, THE HMG OFFERED PACKAGE OF PROPOSALS FOR SECURITY AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION. REGARDING SECURITY, THE BRITISH PROPOSED TO RESTRICT THE BELIZEAN RIGHT TO ENTER INTO SEPARATE DEFENSE AGREEMENTS WITH FOURTH PARTIES, TO SET UP A JOINT GUATEMALAN-BELIZEAN DEFENSE COUNCIL, TO ENACT A FORMAL AGREEMENT FOR SECURITY CONSULTATION TO INSURE THE REGULAR EXCHANGE OF SECURITY INFORMATION BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND BELIZE. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, THE BRITISH PROPOSED AN AGREEMENT ON MARITIME BOUNDARIES, FREE TRANSIT FOR GUATEMALA, FREE MARKET ARRANGEMENTS, CURRENCY ARRANGEMENTS, ETC. THEY ALSO PROPOSED A JOINT DEVELOPMENT FUND TO WHICH THE BRITISH WOULD CONTRIBUTE. ROWLANDS SAID THE BRITISH WERE PREPARED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THIS INTO ONE OR MORE TRIPARTITE TREATIES TO WHICH THE UK WOULD BE A PARTY.

4. ROWLANDS SAID THIS WAS A NEW AND UNIQUE INITIATIVE, AND THAT HMG HAD NEVER PROPOSED SUCH A TREATY ARRANGEMENT BEFORE IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD. ROWLANDS HAD GIVEN A COPY OF A DRAFT TREATY TO MOLINA IN NEW ORLEANS DURING THEIR PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, AND HE EXPECTED MOLINA TO SHARE THIS ONLY WITH HIS "IMMEDIATE STAFF." HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE GUATEMALAN POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES KNEW OF THE TREATY DRAFT OR ITS CONTENTS. HE SAID THAT BELIZEAN PREMIER GEORGE PRICE HAD AGREED TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE DRAFT TREATY, BUT ONLY ON THE BASIS THAT THEY NOT BECOME PUBLIC AT THIS STAGE. ROWLANDS PROVIDED A COPY OF THE DRAFT TREATY TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS, BUT, STRESSING THE EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF THE DRAFT, HE ASKED THAT WE NOT TELL THE GUATEMALANS WE HAVE RECEIVED THIS COPY. ROWLANDS SAID THAT THE UK PROPOSAL WAS OFFERED AS A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION, NOT AS THE LAST WORD, BUT THAT IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT IT NOT BE REJECTED OUT OF HAND. THE PARTIES HAVE AGREED TO MEET AGAIN IN JULY AT WHICH TIME IT WILL BE MOLINA'S TURN TO RESPOND TO THE UK INITIATIVE. MEANWHILE, WORKING LEVEL MEETINGS WILL BE
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HELD IN PREPARATION FOR THAT NEXT SESSION.

5. ROWLANDS ANTICIPATED THAT THE GUATEMALAN RESPONSE TO THE BRITISH INITIATIVE MIGHT, INITIALLY, BE NEGATIVE AND PROBABLY WOULD INVOLVE THREE ELEMENTS. THE GOG MIGHT CONTEND THAT THE CONSULTATION PROVISIONS ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY OBLIGATORY; IT MIGHT RENEW THE "ASSOCIATE STATE" CONCEPT; AND IT MIGHT RENEW DEMANDS FOR A TERRITORIAL

CESSION, PROBABLY ALONG THE MONKEY RIVER LINE. HE WOULD RESPOND TO THESE POINTS AS FOLLOWS: THE TREATY PROVISIONS FOR CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND BELIZE WOULD BE MEANINGFUL WITH BRITAIN AS A THIRD PARTY; THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY VOTE IN FAVOR OF A FULLY INDEPENDENT BELIZE PRECLUDED ACCEPTANCE OF THE "ASSOCIATE STATE" CONCEPT; A TERRITORIAL CESSION ALONG THE MONKEY RIVER LINE WOULD BE SIMPLY UNACCEPTABLE. IN ENSUING DISCUSSION

OF TERRITORIAL QUESTION, ROWLANDS ASKED HOW ANY PARTIAL CESSION COULD SATISFY THE GUATEMALAN POLITICAL PROBLEM SINCE THE GOG PUBLIC POSITION AND GUATEMALAN CONSTITUTION ASSERTED A CLAIM TO ALL OF BELIZE. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT THE SIZE OF A CESSION MAY TURN OUT TO BE LESS IMPORTANT FOR THE GUATEMALANS THAN THE NEED TO GET SOMETHING THAT AT LEAST LOOKS SIGNIFICANT IN EXCHANGE FOR BELIZEAN INDEPENDENCE. A TERRITORIAL CESSION MARKED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE PRESENT BORDERS AND THE MONKEY RIVER LINE, TOGETHER WITH THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED TREATY, MIGHT GIVE THE GOG ENOUGH TO OVERCOME DOMESTIC OPPOSITION TO A SETTLEMENT. TYING A TERRITORIAL CONCESSION TO GUATEMALA'S NEED FOR AN OPENING TO THE SEA MIGHT HELP. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS, ROWLANDS STATED THAT HMG CONTEMPLATED THE DEMARCATION OF NEW MARITIME FRONTIERS BETWEEN BELIZE AND GUATEMALA, AND HE SAID THAT HMG WOULD BE MORE GENEROUS IN THIS THAN REQUIRED BY INTERNATIONAL LAW. ROWLANDS ALSO SAID THAT THE PROPOSED TREATY COULD DEAL WITH ALL RELATED QUESTIONS, SUCH AS THOSE OF TRANSIT, EXPLOITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, AND EXPLOITATION OF LIVING RESOURCES. HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE WHOLE QUESTION OF ACCESS TO THE SEA DID NOT SEEM VERY IMPORTANT TO THE GUATEMALANS IN NEW ORLEANS.

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6. ROGERS ASKED ROWLANDS IF HE NOW FELT THAT THE GUATEMALANS REALLY WANTED A SETTLEMENT. ROWLANDS SAID IT WAS "TOUCH AND GO." HE HAD INSISTED TO MOLINA THAT THE PROBLEM COULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE INDEFINITELY WITHOUT A SETTLEMENT. THE SITUATION CAN ONLY GET WORSE; FAILURE TO FIND A SOLUTION SOON COULD PRODUCE A REGIONAL SECURITY PROBLEM WITH OTHER PARTIES BECOMING INVOLVED. HE ALSO ASSERTED THAT HMG "WAS NOT WILLING TO GO INTO THE DOCK" FOR HAVING STIFLED BELIZEAN ASPIRATIONS TO INDEPENDENCE.

7. ROGERS ASKED ROWLANDS WHAT HE THOUGHT MIGHT HAPPEN IF NO SETTLEMENT WERE ACHIEVED DURING THESE NEGOTIATIONS. ROWLANDS REPLIED THAT BELIZE WOULD QUICKLY TAKE THE ISSUE

BACK TO THE UN. PRICE PROBABLY WOULD ALSO BEGIN TO FLIRT WITH "CERTAIN CARIBBEAN POWERS", SEEKING "MATERIAL SUPPORT". HE WAS SURE THAT THERE WERE "ONE OR TWO" SUCH PARTIES WHO MIGHT BE WILLING TO HELP BELIZE AND THAT THIS WOULD CREATE A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION FOR HMG. ROGERS ASKED WHAT THE JAMAICANS WERE DOING AT THIS POINT, AND ROWLANDS SAID THAT THEY WERE PROBABLY WAITING ON EVENTS, BUT WERE PREPARED TO ADVISE PRICE. PRICE AND THE OTHERS HAD BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE IN NEW ORLEANS AND HAD AVOIDED ANY INCLINATION TO BREAK UP THE NEGOTIATIONS.

8. ROWLANDS HOPED THAT THE GOG WILL DECIDE TO NEGOTIATE ON THE BASIS OF THE BRITISH PACKAGE, AND THAT IT WILL MAKE A REASONABLE COUNTER-OFFER ONCE THEY UNDERSTAND THAT HMG IS MAKING A SPECIAL EFFORT TO REACH A SETTLEMENT. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD FOUND MOLINA TO BE A VERY RATIONAL, CIVILIZED MAN. ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE MEETINGS, MOLINA HAD HINTED AT THE VENEZUELAN PROPOSAL FOR A FIVE-YEAR MORATORIUM ON THE INDEPENDENCE QUESTION. ROWLANDS TOLD MOLINA THIS WAS HOPELESS". ON THE SECOND DAY, MOLINA HAD, BY IMPLICATION, AGREED THAT INDEFINITE STAGNATION WAS IMPOSSIBLE. MOLINA ALSO HAD ADMITTED, IMPLICITLY, THAT THE GUATEMALAN ARMY DOES NOT WANT TO FIGHT FOR BELIZE. ROGERS COMMENTED THAT HE ALSO SENSED VERY LITTLE SUPPORT IN GUATEMALA FOR A REVANCHIST POLICY.

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9. DISCUSSION CONTINUED DURING LUNCH AND THE BRITISH PRESSED ROGERS AS TO POSSIBLE EXTENT OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT WHICH COULD BE EXPECTED IN ANY SOLUTION. WITH REGARD TO OUR INTERVENTION IN THE FINAL STAGES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, ROGERS MADE IT CLEAR THAT USG PARTICIPATION COULD ONLY COME AT THE VERY END OF THE PROCESS WHEN ALL PARTIES WERE IN BASIC AGREEMENT. IT WOULD BE MORE OF A U.S. ENDORSEMENT THAN A SUBSTANTIVE INTERVENTION. AS FOR USG PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT FUND, WE ATTEMPTED TO PUT ANY POSSIBLE U.S. SUPPORT IN TERMS OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK RATHER THAN BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS.

10. ROWLANDS ALSO MADE IT VERY CLEAR IN THE LUNCHEON DISCUSSIONS THAT HMG IS DETERMINED TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM IN THE SHORT RUN. HE INDICATED THAT IT COULD ONLY BECOME MORE THORNY WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME AND THEREFORE THE IDEA OF PROGRAMMED PROCRASTINATION WAS NOT A VIABLE OPTION. SISCO

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